



YEAR OF THE DOG. “Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Bronze,” an exhibit of a dozen sculptures by Ai Weiwei representing the animal symbols of the traditional Chinese zodiac, is on view through June 24 at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene, Oregon. Ai drew inspiration for the 12 heads from those originally located at Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace), an imperial retreat outside Beijing. (Photo courtesy of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art)

“Circle of Animals/ Zodiac Heads: Bronze” on view at JSMA

“Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Bronze,” an exhibit of a dozen sculptures by Ai Weiwei representing the animal symbols from the traditional Chinese zodiac, is currently on display in the North Courtyard at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) in Eugene, Oregon. The artist drew inspiration for the 12 heads from those originally located at Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace), an imperial retreat outside Beijing.

The bronze sculptures, each roughly 10 feet tall, represent the signs of the lunar zodiac — one mythical creature and 11 real-world animals. The pieces are on view through June 24, 2018.

Ai created the body of work in two sizes: the bronze monumental series and the gold collector series. The “Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Bronze” series was his first major public sculpture project.

Designed in the 18th century by two European Jesuits serving in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) court of Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799; ruled 1735-1799), the twelve zodiac animal heads originally functioned as a water clock fountain in the European-style gardens of the Old Summer Palace.

In 1860, Yuanming Yuan was ransacked by French and British troops and the animal heads were pillaged. By re-creating and re-contextualizing the objects on an oversized scale, Ai focuses attention on issues of looting and repatriation while extending his ongoing exploration of the “fake” and the “copy” in relation to the original, encouraging open discourse on these complex topics.

Ai’s “Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Bronze and Gold” series have been exhibited at more than 40 international venues and seen by millions of people since the official launch in New York City in 2011, making it one of the most viewed sculpture projects in the history of contemporary art.

One of China’s most prolific and provocative contemporary artists, Ai is known for major projects including the installation “Fairytale” at Documenta 12 in 2007 and his collaboration with architects Herzog & de Meuron on the design of the main stadium for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, as well as for his embrace of the internet and social media as active platforms for cultural commentary and artistic practice in their own right.

Throughout his career, Ai has offered insight into the relationships between art, society, and individual experience through his exploration of universal topics such as culture, history, politics, and tradition.

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, located at 1430 Johnson Lane in Eugene, Oregon, is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from 11:00am to 5:00pm, with extended hours on Thursday until 8:00pm. To learn more, call (541) 346-3027 or visit <jsma.uoregon.edu>.

Dan Dan Noodles

By **Katie Workman**
The Associated Press

Dan Dan Noodles are a classic Chinese dish originating in Sichuan province. Noodles have been part of Chinese cuisine for more than 4,000 years, and long strands symbolize longevity, one of the nicest things you can wish for on the Lunar New Year (which begins February 16 this year).

Dan Dan Noodles are essentially long skinny noodles topped with a flavorful sauce built on ground pork and seasoned with pickled vegetables, chilis, soy sauce, and a bit of Chinese wine and vinegar. The dish was originally a street food. The name Dan Dan refers to the pole on which street vendors in Sichuan would carry the pots of food: one for the noodles, another for the sauce.

A few of the ingredients might take a little work to find unless you live near a great Asian market. Seek them out if you want to approach authenticity, but otherwise use some easy substitutions: If you cannot find the Chinese black vinegar, substitute even amounts of rice vinegar and balsamic vinegar. Really any vinegar would be fine, but that combo provides the closest approximation. Dry sherry is a fine substitute for the rice wine.



LONG NOODLES/LONG LIFE. Noodles have been part of Chinese cuisine for more than 4,000 years, and long strands symbolize longevity, one of the nicest things you can wish for on the Lunar New Year. Pictured is a serving of Dan Dan Noodles, a dish that has origins as a street food. (Carrie Crow via AP)

If you have access to an Asian market, or want to find a source online, then buy ya cai, zha cai, or Tianjin dong cai, which is a preserved vegetable mix, or sometimes just pickled mustard root. It’s available in cans or jars. Otherwise jarred pickles work just fine.

There are many versions of this dish, as there are with any classic recipe. Some are brothier than

others, some have peanut butter or sesame or ginger, or Szechuan peppercorns. Sichuan cooking is often quite spicy, and these noodles are no exception. If you’re feeling a little timid about the amount of chili paste, you can always dial it back a bit — these noodles definitely pack a kick.

Katie Workman has written two cookbooks focused on easy, family-friendly cooking, *Dinner Solved!* and *The Mom 100 Cookbook*.

Dan Dan Noodles

Serves 4

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Sauce:

1/4 cup chili garlic paste
1/4 cup vegetable, peanut, or canola oil
2 tablespoons Chinkiang, or Chinese Black vinegar
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon sugar
4 scallions, minced

Pork and Noodles:

1 tablespoon vegetable or peanut oil
1 pound ground pork
1/4 cup chopped, jarred Chinese pickled vegetables or small diced pickles
1 cup roughly chopped arugula (optional)
2 teaspoons finely minced garlic
2 tablespoons Chinese rice wine (which might be called Shaoxing, or a Japanese version called Mirin), or use dry sherry
1 cup chicken broth

16 ounces fresh Chinese wheat noodles or 8 ounces dried Chinese noodles, or substitute spaghetti

To serve:

1/4 cup crushed roasted peanuts
1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Combine the chili paste, 1/4 cup oil, vinegar, soy sauce, sugar, and minced scallions in a large bowl and stir to mix well.

Heat the one tablespoon vegetable or peanut oil in a large skillet or wok over high heat. Add the pork and sauté until browned, about three minutes. Drain if there is any liquid in the pan, then return to the pan. Stir in the preserved vegetables or pickles, arugula (if using), and the garlic. Cook for another minute. Add the rice wine and stir until it is evaporated, about one minute. Add the broth and bring to a simmer, then remove from the heat.

Add the noodles to the boiling water and cook according to the package directions (fresh usually takes about half as long as dried). Drain.

Stir the sauce to re-combine, then add the noodles to the sauce and toss to coat. Add the pork mixture and toss again. Serve hot, in shallow bowls, sprinkled with the peanuts and sliced scallions.

Nutrition information per serving: 687 calories (261 calories from fat); 29 g fat (8 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 76 mg cholesterol; 1,628 mg sodium; 73 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 9 g sugar; 28 g protein.



*Have a safe
and prosperous
Year of the Dog!*

*February 16, 2018 to
February 4, 2019*